(c) the total warehousing capacity in the State and whether it is being utilized 100 per cent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The production of foodgrains, alongwith the quantity of wheat and rice procured in the last three marketing seasons in Punjab by FCI and State agencies for Central pool is as follows:

(in lakh tonnes)

Season	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Production	Procurement	Prod.	Proc.	Prod.*	Proc.
Kharif	106.20	88.55 (of rice)	106.45	78.28 (of rice)	110.30	79.07 (of rice)
Rabi	145.64	69.46 (of wheat in RMS 2006-07)	146.68	67.81 (of wheat in RMS 2007-08)	158.13	99.39 (of wheat in RMS 2008-09)
Total	251.84	158.01	253.13	146.09	268.43	178.46

* 4th advance estimates released on 9.7.08

(c) The total warehousing capacity in Punjab with FCI as on 31.10.2008 and its utilization is as follows:

(in lakh tonnes)

Capacity	Stocks held	Utilization %
55.65	24.48	44

List of items included in Essential Commodities Act

†2063. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of items included in the list of essential commodities under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 at present;

(b) whether Government proposes to review the importance of this Act keeping in view the present era of economic liberalization?

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by when, Government proposes to make such a review; and

(e) the latest status of the matter as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) At present there are 7 number of essential commodities included in the list under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. These are as under:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(1) Drugs;

(2) Fertilizer, whether inorganic, organic or mixed;

(3) Foodstuffs, including edible oilseeds and oils;

(4) Hank yarn made wholly from cotton;

(5) Petroleum and petroleum products;

(6) Raw jute and jute textile;

(7) (i) seeds of food-crops and seeds of fruits and vegetables;

(ii) seeds of cattle fodder; and

(iii) jute seeds.

(b) There is no such proposal.

(c) to (e) In view of (b) above question does not arise.

Prices of foodgrains

†2064. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the continuous rise in the prices of food items and foodgrains severely affect the society, especially the poor people;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the prices of food items, foodgrains, fruits and vegetables have been rising continuously right from the beginning of year 2008 and the rate of their rise is more than the general wholesale index;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the decision taken by Government to face this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Inflation in some food articles mainly rice and pulses except gram dal was witnessed mainly due to inadequate supplies in relation to demand, increase in MSP and bonus, diversion of food grain to bio-fuel and animal feed, production losses due to inclement weather conditions in both domestic and international markets. Government has protected poor sections of society through the following measures:

(i) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Antodaya Anna Yojna (AAY). Under the TPDS, wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene oils are allocated to State Governments for distribution through the Fair Price Shops. The offtake of wheat and rice under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes (OWS) has, however, been going up. For TPDS, wheat and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.